

my information, a system much like the Scotch feuing system (though without feu charters) is in force. If a man wishes to build a house he takes a present of a few sugar-loaves or a few *Jcrans* with him, and applies to an Agha for a site. After it is granted he pays an annual ground rent of 4s. 9d., but he can build his house as he pleases, and it cannot be taken from him so long as he pays his ground rent. Moreover, he can sell the house and give a title-deed to the purchaser, with the sole restriction that the new possessor must become a vassal of the Agha.

In addition to the payment of the ground rent, the tenant is taxed annually by the Agha for every female buffalo 2s., for every cow 1s., and for every ewe and she-goat 6d., after they have begun to bear young. The Agha also receives from each householder annually two fowls, a load of *kiziks*, some eggs, three days' labour or the price of it, and a fee on every occasion of a marriage. Each house pays also a tax of Sd. a year and gives a present of firewood to the *Serperast* of Urmi, the Mussulman governor of the Christians. In his turn the Agha pays to the Shah from a third to a half of the total taxation.

A village -house, even when built of sun-dried bricks, rarely costs more than £35, and often not the half of that sum.¹ The great feature of a Syrian dwelling is what is called emphatically "the house"; the combined living-room, bedroom, smoking-room, kitchen, bakery, and work-room of one or more families. This room

cannot possess
a *lalaMana*, as its openings for light and air
are in the
roof. A stable, store-rooms, and granary are
attached to it.

Vineyards are the chief reliance of the
Syrians of the
Urmi Plain, their produce, whether as
grapes, raisins, or
wine, being always marketable. They are
held on the

¹ The mode of building mud houses was described in
Letter VI. vol. i
p. 149.